REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action dated April 1, 2008. Claims 1-31 are pending.

Claim 1 stands rejected under Section 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Kubo (US 2002/0075436). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner apparently contends that it would have been obvious to have combined the arrangement of the second orientation-regulating structures 28 illustrated in FIG. 25A of Kubo et al. and the picture element electrode 14H illustrated in FIG. 9B of Kubo et al., and the resulting structure of the combination would allegedly meet the independent claims of the present application. Applicant respectfully disagree.

Kubo et al. teaches to provide the second orientation-regulating structure(s) in a region corresponding to a center of the unit solid portion and to provide another second orientation-regulating structure(s) in a region corresponding to a center of the opening. However, Kubo et al. fails to teach to provide an orientation-regulating structure in an ***area corresponding to a connecting portion of an electrode*** as called for in claim 1. Moreover, Kubo et al. fails to teach to provide an orientation-regulating structure in an area corresponding to a connecting portion for connecting at least three unit solid portions of the unit solid portions as called for in claim 1.

The second orientation-regulating structures on the second substrate of Kubo et al. are provided in order to stabilize the radially-inclined orientation of the liquid crystal domains formed on the unit solid portions and the openings. Therefore, the arrangement of the second orientation-regulating structures has the dependency on the shapes and the arrangement of the unit solid portions and the openings on the first substrate. Accordingly, a person of ordinary skill in the art would not have ignored the difference between the shapes and the arrangement of the unit solid portions and the openings illustrated in FIG. 9B and those of the unit solid portions and

the openings illustrated in FIG. 25A. For the above reasons, it would not have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to provide the second orientation-regulating structure 28 of FIG 25A in an area corresponding to a connecting portion of the picture element electrode 14H of FIB. 9B.

Claim 14 requires that the *second orientation-regulating structure is provided in an area corresponding to a central portion or the vicinity thereof of each of the unit solid portions.* Claim 14 relates, for example, to the embodiments shown in Figs. 13(a), 15(c) of the instant application, where the counter substrate includes both first orientation-regulating means (slits or protrusions) 28 in the areas substantially corresponding to the connecting portions 14d and second orientation-regulating means (slits or protrusions) 29 in areas substantially corresponding to the respective centers of the unit solid portions 14b'. Kubo fails to disclose or suggest the above italicized subject matter of claim 14. Fig. 9B of Kubo fails to disclose or suggest any slits or protrusions on the counter substrate in areas substantially corresponding to the central areas of slid portions 14b'. Instead, Kubo teaches away from this by only providing orientation-regulating means in areas corresponding to the alleged connecting portions of the pixel electrode. Moreover, Fig. 25A also teaches away from this because Fig. 25A of Kubo also fails to disclose or suggest providing slits or protrusions in areas corresponding to both the connecting portions and the unit solid portions of the pixel electrodes. In particular, in Fig. 25A of Kubo there are no slits or apertures on the counter (or common) substrate in areas corresponding to any connecting portion of a pixel electrode.

If any minor matter remains to be resolved, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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